

Connections

A Publication for Employees of the Missouri Department of Transportation

December 13, 2012

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Challenge Expanded to Include All MoDOT Employees

by Jim Dickson

For the past seven years, field employees have had the chance to earn an extra \$500 for creating one of the state's best tool or equipment innovations. Now, all MoDOT employees have that same chance by improving a process, project or product. The ProMo Challenge is a companion program to the Tool and Equipment Challenge this year and culminates at the Innovations Showcase in April 2013.

"We've had tremendous success with the Tool and Equipment Challenge, and it just makes sense to expand what we are doing to include more of our employees," said Assistant Chief Engineer Don Hillis.

According to Hillis, each district and the Central Office will identify up to six innovations that improve overall safety, protect the environment or better use resources. The innovations can be an improved process, project or product. And just like its sister program, the Tool and Equipment Challenge, there is a wild card category for any innovation that may not clearly fit the criteria but deserves to be shared statewide. The new challenge also uses a similar evaluation process to determine the top innovations to compete at the statewide showcase. Much of the two challenges are similar, such as the individual and district awards. However, since this challenge is getting a bit later start, the deadline for submissions has been extended to the end of January. The deadline for Tool and Equipment Challenge submissions remains the end of December.



"I'm excited to see all the innovations in one room," said Hillis. "I think we can learn a lot from each other. I have a hunch we'll have an innovation in one area that will spark an idea for innovation in another. I don't think we can go wrong getting more employees together talking about innovation."

The Innovations Showcase is part of a new joint meeting of MoDOT project delivery and operation staffs. In previous years, the State Project Development Annual Meeting and the Statewide Spring Maintenance Meeting were held separately during the first four months of the year. This year those two meetings will share a single facility during the same week in April with participants from both meetings attending the Innovations Showcase. While the week for the joint meetings has been set for April 8-12, the exact dates for each meeting and the Innovations Showcase will be determined when the winning bid is confirmed later this month.

Employees can check out all the details for both challenges at [Solutions at Work](#) (this link works for active employees only).



Getting to Know Your Employee Advisory Council

by Tammy Wallace



The Employee Advisory Council is on a mission to make sure every MoDOT employee knows the benefits of having the EAC representing you. With the Bolder Five-Year Direction behind us, and a new year gleaming ahead, it seems the appropriate time to get employees reconnected with the EAC.

To begin, the EAC wants to remind employees why the council exists, the values that guide them and introduce EAC members.

Background

The department established the EAC in 2005. The goal of the EAC then and now is to support the work environment of employees by assisting management with cultural diversity, policy review and communication issues. They are the voice of employees.

Values

The values the founding EAC members set in place in 2005 still guide the new members today:

- We exist to serve Missouri Department of Transportation employees.
- We will communicate with department employees in a timely and forthright manner.

- We will be fair, honest and open while acting with integrity in handling matters concerning the EAC.
- We will hold all matters confidential within the EAC.

“We’ve refined the processes over the years on how we accept and address concerns,” said EAC Chair Matt Sonner. “However, the goal is always the same. To review each concern, research the concern enlisting the help of management, respond to the employee and document so others can also benefit from the information.”

In the months ahead, the EAC will highlight the work they do on behalf of employees in upcoming editions of Connections.

If you have questions or concerns you would like to direct to the EAC, contact any member below, or submit your information online at [EAC](#) (*this link works for active employees only*). They are here to serve you.

Your EAC Members

Leadership

Matt Sonner, Chair
Jeff Leible, Vice-Chair
Denise Thompson, Secretary
Amber Dydell, Assistant Secretary

Northwest District

Matt Sonner - Facilities Op. Supervisor
Amber Dydell – Sr. Office Assistant
Rodney Welch – Maint. Supervisor
Rodney Wright – Sr. Maint. Worker

Northeast District

Jackie Bordeleau – Sr. Const. Inspector
Keith Boling – Equip. Tech. Supervisor
Damon LaFaver – Sr. Information Tech.

Kansas City District

Tim Hibdon – Sr. Maint. Worker

Central District

James Hake – Inter. Maint. Worker
Joe Schmidt – Sr. Maint. Worker
Beth Humphrey – Sr. Maint. Worker

St. Louis District

Glenn Holmes – Maint. Worker
Denise Thompson – Certified Appraiser
Cindy Farrar – Construction Inspector

Southwest District

Jason Grant – Sr. Maint. Worker
Rodney Fuller – Inter. Maint. Worker
Kelly Tummons – Sr. Maint. Worker

Southeast District

Michael Roberts – Sr. Equip. Tech.
Mary Shrubbs – Executive Assistant
Jeff Leible – Maint. Supervisor

Central Office

Randy Kelly – Travel Serv. Supervisor
Kim Russell – Motor Carrier Proj. Mgr.
Brenda Wells – MCS System & Training Analyst

EAC Liaison

Rudy Nickens – Equal Opportunity & Diversity Director

Working Smarter? There's an App for That

by Holly Dentner

As part of the Bolder Five-Year Direction, MoDOT leadership chartered a statewide “virtual office” team to find ways for our field employees to work more efficiently while maintaining an excellent level of customer service.

As part of that team’s effort, a select group of maintenance supervisors are part of a pilot program to test mobile technology – smartphones and tablets – to assess whether or not these tools will help manage some of the administrative tasks they would normally complete with a desktop computer at a maintenance building.

“Many MoDOT employees spend their days working on the road or in the field, away from a desk and a computer,” said Todd Miller, maintenance liaison engineer. “With fewer resources and larger geographical areas to cover, we are looking for ways to keep them as productive as possible and reduce the time they have to sit at those desks.”

Four maintenance supervisors in each district are participating. They were selected to ensure a variety of technological expertise. A mix of urban and rural maintenance locations were also selected.

Maintenance supervisors will use smartphones and iPads to work on customer service center requests, time sheets, One Call excavation requests, billing and invoice payments, and answering email.

“We want them to explore anything these devices are capable of that can make them more efficient,” said Miller. “We’re encouraging them to be creative in finding ways to make the technology work for them.”

The pilot program runs from December 2012 to March 2013. The maintenance supervisors will be surveyed regularly during that time to gauge their abilities with the devices and to measure their usefulness.



What's Happening



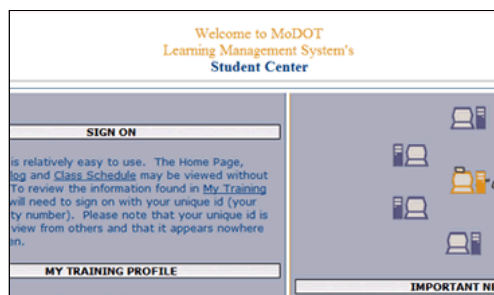
Interstate 49 Opening Ceremony

Interstate 49 between Pineville and Kansas City was officially designated Wednesday in an unveiling ceremony in a middle school gym near the highway in Joplin.

See complete coverage on the [Southwest District](#) page.

Doing the honors were, from left, MoDOT Director Kevin Keith, Federal Highway Administrator Victor Mendez, U.S. Sen. Roy Blunt and Missouri Highways and Transportation Commissioner Rudy Farber.

More Basic User Sharepoint Training Classes Available in 2013



Wed., Jan. 16, Wed., Feb. 13, Mon., March 18
Classes offered each day at:
9 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. - 3 p.m.

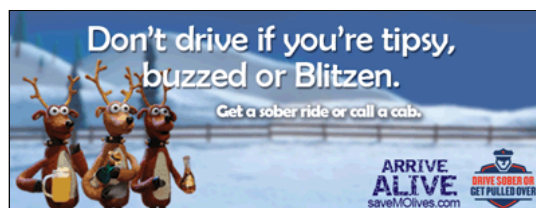
Please visit the LMS Training resource center to sign up.
[LMS Student Center](#) (Course Code: 25198)
(this link works for active employees only)
Contact: Anita Buddemeyer
Intermediate IS Technologist
Anita.Buddemeyer@modot.mo.gov (573) 526-7931



FHWA's Office of Safety Photo Contest

The Federal Highway Administration's Office of Safety is holding a photo contest. All entries must be received by 12:00 midnight on December 28, 2012.

Click here for [contest information](#)
or call 202-366-2327
Submit entries to - karen.timpone@dot.gov



Don't Drive if You're Tipsy, Buzzed or Blitzen

'Tis the season to be jolly, but don't forget to designate a driver or call a cab to avoid driving impaired. To keep motorists safe, law enforcement is on the lookout for impaired drivers, with targeted enforcement efforts Dec. 10-16.

To ensure your holiday season is jolly, please follow these three simple steps to prevent tragedy:

- Plan ahead. If you will be drinking, do not drive. Designate a sober driver or arrange another safe way home.
- If you are impaired, find another way home. Use a taxi, call a sober friend or family member, or use public transportation.
- Be responsible. If someone you know is drinking, do not let that person get behind the wheel. If you see an impaired driver on the road, contact law enforcement. Your actions may save someone's life, and inaction could cost a life.



There are no excuses to drive impaired. Roadway safety is EVERYONE'S responsibility. ARRIVE ALIVE.

December Service Anniversaries

35 Years

Bruce J. Bryson – NE
Allen W. Bley – SW

30 Years

Kevin L. Walter – KC

25 Years

Judith L. MaGruder – NW
Jerry A. Martin – CD
Mari L. Heeter – SW
James D. Carney – CO

20 Years

Ricklyn L. Adams – NW
Curtis R. Grossman – NW
Tammy S. Rhoades – NW
Robert L. McElhaney – NE
William D. Limback – KC
Leroy H. Wieberg – CD
Karyn M. Veltrop – CD
Garland L. Dewitt – SW
Russell M. Divine – SE
Michael L. Hensley – SE
Jeffrey T. Amelunke – SE
Donald J. Boyer – SE

20 Years Continued

Byron W. Davenport – SE
Leonard D. Foster – CO
Dennis W. Heckman – CO
Shaun W. Schmitz – CO

15 Years

Jay P. Barnes – NW
Jody A. Butner – NE
Jerrett L. Pence – KC
Rick A. Moore – KC
Donald M. Ramirez -- CD
Darius W. Dowdy – SE
Claude L. Bright – SE
Martin A. Brose – CO
Jason M. Blomberg – CO

10 Years

Richard G. Skirvin -- NE
Marcus A. Boulton – KC
Dwayne N. Rogers – CD
Donald J. Sparks – SL
Douglas F. Logsden – SL
Trenton J. Laur – SL
Brian P. Dye – SW
Gwendolyn R. Houston – CO

5 Years

Jake R. Harbin – NW
Sharisse I. Nemes – NE
Stephen D. Vogt – KC
Donald E. Jackson – KC
John J. Schaefer – CD
Matthew D. Pardoe – CD
Daniel Tucker – SL
Monty D. Hilde – SW
John T. Kenney – SW
Travis W. Tooley – SE
Seth Z. Bollinger – SE
Sheila A. Schulte – CO
Shashanta L. Murray – CO
John Barbee – CO
Carmen M. Claypool – CO
Jack Wang – CO

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Legislative Leadership - 2013

With the November elections behind us, the 2013 Missouri legislative session is scheduled to begin Jan. 9. Although you probably know who won the elections, you may not know who the House and Senate selected as their leaders for our great state in 2013.

As far as MoDOT's role in this upcoming session, Jay Wunderlich, MoDOT's Governmental Relations Director, says the Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission and MoDOT will not have a legislative agenda this year. "Our primary focus is to educate the elected officials on our financial situation and introduce the newly elected officials on how we are structured, work and operate," said Wunderlich.

There was little change with respect to the overall makeup of Missouri's statewide elected officials and Missouri's General Assembly. Missouri still has a Democrat governor as Republicans maintain control of both the House and Senate. The biggest change is now both the House and Senate are "veto proof," which means now there are enough Republicans in each chamber to override any governor veto without having to enlist Democrats.

The 2013 Missouri Senate will be comprised of 24 Republicans and 10 Democrats, compared to 26 Republicans and 8 Democrats in the 2012 session.

The 2013 Missouri House will be comprised of 110 Republicans and 53 Democrats, the largest ever Republican majority in the House.

2013 Leadership

Governor Jay Nixon
Lt. Governor Peter Kinder
Attorney General Chris Koster
State Treasurer Clint Zweifer
Secretary of State Jason Kander

Shortly upon the conclusion of the 2012 election, both the House and Senate Republican and Democrat Caucuses met in the Capitol to elect their respective leaders for the next two years.

The House elected the following:

Rep. Tim Jones (R-Eureka) House Speaker
Rep. Jason Smith (R-Salem) House Speaker Pro Tem
Rep. John Diehl, Jr. (R-Town and Country) House Majority Floor Leader
Rep. Mike Cierpiot (R-Lee's Summit) House Majority Assistant Floor Leader
Rep. Sandy Crawford (R-Bufferlo) House Majority Whip
Rep. Shelley Kenney (R-Marble Hill) House Majority Caucus Chair
Rep. Mike Bernskoetter (R-Jefferson City) House Majority Caucus Secretary
Rep. Jacob Hummel (D-St. Louis) House Minority Floor Leader
Rep. Gail McCann Beatty (D-Kansas City) House Assistant Minority Floor Leader
Rep. John Rizzo (D-Kansas City) House Minority Whip
Rep. Steve Webb (D-Florissant) House Minority Caucus Chair
Rep. Chris Kelly (D-Columbia) House Minority Caucus Vice-chair
Rep. Genise Montecillo (D-St. Louis) House Minority Caucus Secretary

The speaker and the speaker pro tem candidates must still receive confirmation from the full House when they convene in January to become official.

The Senate elected the following:

Sen. Tom Dempsey (R-St. Charles) President Pro Tem
Sen. Ron Richard (R-Joplin) Senate Floor Leader
Sen. Mike Kehoe (R-Jefferson City) Senate Majority Assistant Floor Leader
Sen. Eric Schmitt (R-Kirkwood) Senate Majority Caucus Chair
Sen. Jay Wasson (R-Nixa) Senate Majority Caucus Secretary
Sen. Brian Nieves (R-Washington) Senate Majority Whip
Sen. Jolie Justus (D-Kansas City) Senate Minority Floor Leader
Sen. Kiki Curls (D-Kansas City) Senate Minority Assistant Floor Leader
Sen. Joseph Keaveny (D-St. Louis) Senate Minority Caucus Chair
Sen. Gina Walsh (D-St. Louis) Senate Minority Caucus Secretary

Like the top House leadership positions, the president pro tem of the Senate appointment will not be official until officially voted on by the full Senate in January.



The above information was obtained from Governmental Relations ***The GR Capitol Report***, found on MoDOT's intranet site at - [GA Capitol Report](#) (*this link works for active employees only*). Employees can check the website for updated information during the session.

Inclement Weather Guidelines

by Micki Knudsen

As the department prepares for winter weather, we all need to plan ahead and take steps to ensure everyone knows their role in helping keep roads and bridges open during snow and ice events. Every employee plays an important role in delivering outstanding customer service, including during winter weather events. So, it's important that employees work during severe weather unless they've already been approved off or need to be off due to illness or injury.



We want all of our employees to arrive to work safely, work safely, and arrive home safely. Our snow fighters and emergency operations center staff members do a great job of clearing our roads and bridges so we can all get to work safely and as soon as possible. But, if there is a need to leave work early or to stay at home due to school closures or hazardous road conditions, employees must seek approval from their supervisors to take annual leave or use comp time to cover this time off or to flex their work week.

In some cases, employees can plan ahead for inclement weather and obtain prior approval from their supervisors to work from home. Employees should not assume they can wait until the morning of a snow and ice event and then ask to work from home. Working from home should be planned for and supervisory approval should be obtained in advance.

When possible, such as when severe weather occurs early in a work week, some of the time missed may be able to be made up by working extra time on other days during the remainder of the work week (use FLEX coding), with supervisor approval. The missed time can only be made up within the same workweek as the absence. If the time is not made up within the workweek, annual leave or comp time must be used.

Please remember that a little bit of planning and advance communication can help ensure we have necessary staff coverage available to deliver outstanding customer service during inclement weather while keeping our most valuable asset, you, safe.

What's Happening at Central Office

Thomas Jefferson Middle School Orchestra Holiday Performance

Thomas Jefferson Middle School Winter Performance

Please join us for a holiday celebration as we welcome the

Thomas Jefferson Middle School Orchestra

**Central Office
Conference Room 100
Monday, December 17
9:00 a.m.**



Monday, Dec 17 - 9 a.m.
105 West Capitol - Hearing Room 100

Contact Darla Gjesvold for more information
Equal Opportunity and Diversity Division
Darla.Gjesvold@modot.mo.gov
573.522.9482

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New Amelia Earhart Memorial Bridge *Ribbon Cutting Held December 4, 2012*

Despite her disappearance over the Pacific Ocean in 1937, Amelia Earhart was spotted this week, alive and well! She made an appearance Dec. 4, at the ribbon cutting for a new bridge named in her honor. Ann Birney, as the famous aviator who was born in 1897 in Atchison, Kan., spoke at the ribbon cutting ceremony along with Kansas Gov. Sam Brownback; Kansas Transportation Secretary Mike King; MoDOT Director Kevin Keith; Kansas Rep. Jerry Henry; Atchison Mayor Allen Reavis; and Atchison County Commissioner Jeff Schuele.

The celebration also included a ceremonial bike ride across the bridge by students from Atchison USD 409, Atchison County USD 377, Atchison Catholic Elementary School, Trinity Lutheran School and Atchison Area Homeschoolers.



Dignitaries, including MoDOT Director Kevin Keith and an Amelia Earhart impersonator, cut the ribbon on the new Amelia Earhart Memorial Bridge linking Winthrop, Mo. and Atchison, Kan.

The new bridge, a four-lane, tied arch structure stretching nearly 2,500 feet over the Missouri River, is distinguished by its double steel arches on the main river span and special aesthetic lighting. It replaces the existing two-lane structure, which was completed in 1938 and is too narrow to handle some of today's larger truck loads and farm implements.

Construction of the bridge began in the spring of 2009. The removal of the existing bridge is scheduled for early 2013. The AE Memorial Bridge replacement is a cooperative project funded by the Missouri and Kansas transportation departments. Of the \$59.4 million construction cost, MoDOT's portion is \$28.8 million and KDOT will contribute the remaining \$30.6 million. The City of Atchison, Kan. also contributed funding for aesthetic lighting on the arch span section of the bridge.

From the Field



The District Office Construction & Materials staff participated in one of the many CPR certification classes being held across the district.



Senior Materials Inspector Heath Hartman practiced CPR technique.

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Planning Contributes to Road Integrity

Since July, maintenance crews have replaced 7200 feet of pipes or pipe liners to maintain proper drainage and keep our roads safe and in good condition. "Our pipe plan follows our pavement plan so we can have our pipes in before the road gets a new overlay," said Maintenance Superintendent Dan Brumagin. "Obviously, there are emergency replacements, but we try to follow the plan as much as possible," he added.

Recently, a shoulder and overlay project on Highway 47 south of Warrenton was accelerated. "There were some pipes that were too far deteriorated to put liners in, so we were going to have to close the road," Dan said. "This is a higher volume minor for us, so we worked with Rob Frese, work zone coordinator, who helped us by identifying the time of day when we have the least amount of traffic," Dan continued. The road was closed for less than three hours.

Jennifer Hinson, maintenance and traffic engineer, said planning their contract and maintenance work ahead to identify potential pipe replacements prior to overlays helps maintain the integrity of the road, because we do not have to cut into a newly surfaced road.



Mike Niemeyer, Allen Cassmeyer, Harold Johnson and Mark Martin were some of the crews working on Highway 47 near Hopewell Hill in Warren County. Dan Brumagin, maintenance superintendent, said they replaced the pipe, filled it to about 4" from the top with rock, then topped it off with about 4" of hot material to level it out. Crews will monitor it and when it settles, they will add more hot material.

Around the District...



Eighteen very special children were treated to a once-in-a-lifetime



Even though it was her birthday week, Debbie Malone was the one giving a gift. She gave the gift of life! Twenty-four people donated blood at the district and regional offices over the last few weeks.

Christmas party last week at the district office. The children all attended a local head start program and were very excited about their MoDOT "buddies," big bags of treats, lots of yummy goodies to eat, lots of Christmas presents, and, of course, the "Big Guy" himself...Santa (retiree Donnie Kinsler). The kids even sang two holiday songs while jingling bells! This was the final year for the annual Children's Christmas Party which has been supported by employee fundraisers each year. Bob Johnston, Hannibal maintenance, is pictured above with his buddy looking at some of the holiday blow up displays in the design department.

The American Red Cross in Macon gave away a free pie every hour to a lucky donor! More blood drives are planned this winter.



For more info

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1711 S. Highway 61
Hannibal, MO 63401

Comments & Suggestions

We would like to hear from you. Send comments and suggestions to Tammy Wallace at Tammy.Wallace@modot.mo.gov.

Mission

Our mission is to provide a world-class transportation experience that delights our customers and promotes a prosperous Missouri.

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Kansas City District

I-49 News Conference Highlights Corridor Potential

by Steve Porter; Photos by Jennifer Benefield

The gala celebration of Missouri's newest interstate, I-49, came at noon Wednesday, Dec. 12, but later in the afternoon, Kansas City news media were hearing from MoDOT and communities along the route in the Kansas City District why the change is important.

MoDOT held a news conference at 4:30 p.m. Wednesday at Gail's Harley-Davidson dealership in south Grandview to emphasize why it is important that communities along the corridor now are on an interstate. Missouri Highways and Transportation Commissioner Stephen Miller, District Engineer Dan Niec, MoDOT Chief Engineer Dave Nichols and Assistant Chief Engineer Don Hillis were joined by Kansas City Councilman John Sharp, and Mayors Steve Dennis of Grandview, Jimmy Odom of Belton, Peter Kerckhoff of Raymore, Ernest Jungmeyer of Peculiar, Kevin Wood of Harrisonville and Les Whiteside of Archie to explain the impact that a new interstate means for their communities.

The news conference highlighted the steps these communities have taken to partner with MoDOT to improve the interchanges and transportation access along this corridor, and the financial commitment they continue to make in cost-share projects to improve existing interchanges and add new interchanges.

MoDOT and the cities and counties along the I-49 corridor have invested well over \$500 million in transportation improvements in the past five years from the 3-Trails Crossing Memorial Highway in south Kansas City to the Cass/Bates county line. Those improvements include state, county and city routes that intersect with or supplement the I-49 corridor in Jackson and Cass counties.

Many of the improvements could not have occurred without the financial support of cities along the corridor. This represents statewide taxpayer funding teamed with local funds. Improved interchanges at Route 150, 163rd, and soon at Route 291 are the result of this cooperative spirit. New interchanges at North Cass Parkway (187th Street) and in the next few years at 211th Street are also cost share successes. Each cost share dollar stretches state and federal funding, compounding and accelerating improvements, building a more vibrant corridor.



Missouri Highways and Transportation Commissioner Stephen Miller, City of Archie Mayor Les Whiteside and State Senator David Pearce discuss the importance of I-49 to the economic development of our region, state and nation at a Dec. 12 news conference.



Missouri Highways and Transportation Commissioner Stephen Miller (not pictured) encourages Dec. 12 news conference attendees to "dream big" for the future of transportation in Missouri. He then lead the crowd in a "hip-hip-hooray!" cheer for the new I-49.



Drew Corp. of Indianapolis, Ind. installs new I-49 signs at the U.S. 71/I-49 and Route 150 interchange the afternoon of Dec. 12. This is just one of approximately 1,200 signs along the 180-mile corridor that are being installed to denote the new interstate designation.

Interstate 49: Corridor of Growth

Once there was a great road connecting Kansas City and the towns to the south. As horse and wagon freight changed to cars and trucks, the road became a highway, Route 71.

But by the 21st Century, the busy corridor grew into something more. Vehicles and freight multiplied, just-in-time delivery of goods changed the texture of the transportation corridor, impacting commerce along the route. Soon the highway evolved into an interstate, with a future linking Kansas City and all communities to the south to the ports along the Gulf of Mexico - and to the world market.

The growth of the great route was planned, encouraged by the cities, counties and the state of Missouri through which it ran. Citizens chose to invest in new interchanges, in the connecting roads and highways, and the investment built the foundation for a robust future.

WHAT'S THE FUTURE?
 MODOT and the cities and counties along the I-49 corridor have invested well over \$130 million in transportation improvements in the past five years. From the 3-Trail Crossing Memorial Highway in south Kansas City to the Cass County line. Those improvements include state, county and city routes that interact with or supplement the I-49 corridor in Jackson and Cass counties.

Many of the improvements could not have occurred without the financial support of cities along the corridor. This represents statewide taxpayer funding shared with local funds. Improved interchanges at Route 150, 163rd, and soon at Route 291 are the result of this cooperative spirit. New interchanges at North Cass Parkway (150th Street) and in the next few years at 211th Street are also cost share successes. Each cost share dollar attracts state and federal funding for other projects, compounding and accelerating improvements, building a more vibrant corridor.

MODOT EMPLOYMENTS
 Changing the designation from Route 71 to I-49 between Joplin and Kansas City required efforts beyond mere sign replacement. More than 20 at-grade intersections along Route 71 have been eliminated. Some were replaced by overpasses, others by interchanges. South of Route 71 in Joplin, interchanges were built at 283rd Street and 127th Street. A new interchange was constructed at 307th Street.

During the past four years, MODOT also rehabilitated or replaced 19 bridges on mostly supplementary routes in Cass County and 12 in Jackson County, those former farm-to-market roads that are increasingly being used by commuters.

Each community along the I-49 corridor has a unique story. On the north, Kansas City is among

Classic cars parade celebrating the opening of North Cass Parkway interchange in 2010.

America's major cities, and the northern terminus of I-49 feeds directly into the metropolitan area's busiest corridor, I-70. Crossing Memorial Highway, where those interstates now converge. At the south end, near the Cass-Ruby county line, is Archie, now served by two interstate interchanges at Routes A/B and at 307th Street. In between are

continued on page 1



[Click here](#) to read more about the local communities along the I-49 corridor in the Kansas City area.

Belton Mayor and Cass County Commissioner-elect Jimmie Odom, Kansas City Councilman John Sharp, Harrisonville Mayor Kevin Wood, Grandview Mayor Steve Dennis, Archie Mayor Les Whiteside and Missouri Highways and Transportation Commissioner Stephen Miller are all smiles as Kansas City District Engineer Dan Niec kicks off a Dec. 12 news conference touting the significance of I-49 to the state of Missouri.

For more info

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 Lee's Summit, MO 64086

Comments & Suggestions

We would like to hear from you. Send comments and suggestions to Tammy Wallace at Tammy.Wallace@modot.mo.gov.

Mission

Our mission is to provide a world-class transportation experience that delights our customers and promotes a prosperous Missouri.

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Recycled Tires Aid Mowing Process

The very automobile tires that highway crews spend time picking up off of Missouri highways are now playing a role in making the mowing of those highway roadsides more efficient and environmentally friendly.

The Missouri departments of Transportation and Natural Resources have joined together to use mats made from recycled tires to control weeds that grow around highway sign posts. The mats, funded by a grant from the Department of Natural Resources, are designed to hinder vegetation growth, thus reducing the amount of herbicides needed to control weeds.

Fewer weeds at the base of sign posts will enable MoDOT crews to reduce the amount of more labor-intensive mowing and trimming they have to perform, all while keeping the used tires from going to landfills.

"We typically have to apply herbicides around sign posts to kill weeds," said MoDOT Central District Roadside Manager Rand Swanigan. "We also have to mow up close to the posts or use trimmers, which slows us down. The mats will help us cut down on both our herbicide use and our mowing time."

MoDOT crews are installing the vegetation-control pads along U.S. Route 54 between Jefferson City and Kingdom City as part of a project to replace the current metal reflective posts that mark the highway every tenth of a mile. The metal posts, most of which are old and battered, will be replaced with flexible posts that pop back up if hit.

"Placing the mats now at a time that grass and weeds are not growing will allow us to get ahead of the vegetation growth that comes with spring weather," Swanigan said.

Similar vegetation-control mats have been used to curb weeds that sprout up around guard cable and guard rail, but this is the first time MoDOT has used the mats around sign posts for long stretches of highway. Swanigan worked with the mat vendor to design the product for specific use around signs and reflective posts.

Swanigan is confident the mats will achieve the goals of reducing herbicide use and mowing time, but says the department will have a better idea of how well the mats work next spring.



These mats made out of recycled tires are being placed along U.S. Route 54 between Jefferson City and Kingdom City. The mats are designed to control the weeds that grow around highway sign posts and make mowing more efficient and environmentally friendly.

Meta Hill Not So Hilly Anymore

The completion of a project to reduce the steep grade of a hill on Route 133 in Meta was officially celebrated on Dec. 11.

Before the fix, big trucks serving businesses in the area frequently got stuck trying to get up the hill causing disrupted deliveries and frustrating road closures. The new realignment, which runs approximately a half mile south of Route B at Meta and continues south for about a half mile, has taken care of that. The work required closing the roadway and detouring traffic for several months.

"We're proud to deliver this important safety improvement to Meta and surrounding communities," Central District Engineer Dave Silvester told the crowd of about 40 who gathered for the ribbon cutting. "We know closing this road for several months was a real inconvenience for local residents, and we'd like to thank everyone for their patience."

Route 133 from Route B to Route 52 was resurfaced at the same time. That work was completed on Dec. 1. Phillips Grading and Construction, Inc. of Boonville, Mo., was the contractor on the \$1 million project.



State Rep. Tom Loehner and State Rep.-elect Tom Hurst did the honors of cutting the ribbon for the Route 133 realignment and resurfacing project at a ceremony held Dec. 11. Joining them was Osage County Presiding Commissioner Dave Dudenhoeffer, Central District Engineer Dave Silvester and Troy Pinkerton of Phillips Grading and Construction. Standing behind Rep. Loehner is MoDOT Customer Relations Coordinator DeAnne Rickabaugh, who sang the National Anthem at the ceremony.

5, 10, 15 and Counting



Tyrone Barnes, right, a senior maintenance worker with the Columbia maintenance facility, receives his five-year service award from Central District Engineer Dave Silvester.

Congratulations to the following Central District employees who were recently recognized for five, 10 and 15 years of service to MoDOT!

5 Years

Brian Keith Perry
 Brian L. Plaster
 Chad D. West
 Cheryl A. Dean
 Christopher Lee Barnwell
 Donald E. Meyer
 Edwin G. Randolph
 George William Owen
 Glenn Calvin Bunton
 Jason Paul Schaperclaus
 Jeremy D. Hake
 John J. Schaefer
 Joshua B. Rollins
 Justin W. Nash
 Matthew D. Pardoe
 Michael J. Bax
 Nathaniel M. Ragsdale
 Philip E. Hamilton
 Randall W. Weaver
 Russell E. Persicke
 Ryan J. Kliethermes
 Ryan L. Sealock
 Shawn Joseph Buschjost
 Sheldon Redel
 Stanley D. Shields
 Stephen G. Dickneite
 Susan M. Summers

10 Years

Anthony Glenn Middendorf
 Brian E. Black
 Bruce A. Rackers
 Charles Edward Silvey
 Christopher A. Graham
 Daniel Leon Goff
 Danny Ray Scott
 David W. Kliethermes
 Donald Robert Hake
 Dwayne N. Rogers
 Jason M. Harmon
 Jason P. Morff
 John Zachery Noble
 Justin E. Nelson
 Karl F. Desch
 Keith D. Lawson
 Kimberly A. Hickey
 Leslie Allyn Bunton
 Patrick Jerome Wulff
 Richard Murray
 Rusty Lee Quick
 Stephen E. Atkisson
 Travis M. Overstreet
 Wayne L. Creek

15 Years

Anthony Clay Wood
 Christopher E. Scott
 David W. Kunze
 Donald Edward Boettcher
 Donald Max Ramirez
 Geoffrey M. Franks
 Kenneth Victor Thomas
 Laurie Ann Travis
 Patrick J. Bauer
 Phyllis J. Murray
 Steven L. Mccollum
 Susan Elizabeth Ivy
 Troy Allen Wilson
 Wilber L. Barton

Tad M. Owings
Thomas M. Holland
Timothy Dale Hill
Tyrone Barnes

District Happenings

Approximately 60 people turned out for a community briefing on Dec. 5 to find out more about MoDOT's plans to improve the Route D bridge over the Gasconade River in Phelps County.

The Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission is expected to award the project at its March 2013 meeting, with the work scheduled for the summer 2013 months. The bridge will be completely closed during the construction.

Here Area Engineer Preston Kramer visits with Jerome-area residents about the bridge project.



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Comments & Suggestions

We would like to hear from you. Send comments and suggestions to Tammy Wallace at Tammy.Wallace@modot.mo.gov.

Mission

Our mission is to provide a world-class transportation experience that delights our customers and promotes a prosperous Missouri.

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Second Blanchette Bridge Blast Rocks STL

by Linda Wilson Horn
Photos by Cathy Morrison



Approximately 4.5 million pounds of steel were blasted and dropped into the Missouri River.

Last week, 65 pounds of explosives blasted a 1,030 foot long section of the westbound I-70 Blanchette Bridge steel truss dropping 4.5 million pounds of steel into the Missouri River. The 911 dispatch centers from Wentzville to Chesterfield took calls shortly after the 10:25 a.m. blast from citizens wondering what the explosion was from.

The December 4 blast was the second and final explosion to remove the 1958 westbound bridge's steel truss as part of the \$63 million rehabilitation of the bridge. The project will repair the pier caps, replace the steel truss and other steel members and build a new concrete bridge deck and barrier walls. The project closed the westbound bridge to traffic on Nov. 4, 2012, and detoured traffic to the eastbound bridge, which now carries three lanes of I-70 for each direction. Normally, there are five lanes in each direction on two bridges. The reduced lanes on I-70 will remain in place until fall 2013.



Hundreds of people came out to the Missouri River shoreline on December 4 to watch the existing westbound I-70 Blanchette Bridge explode into the river.

Vote for Your Favorite "Crew that Rocks"

Some St. Louis maintenance employees are finalists competing in the 2013 "Crews that Rock" contest. Winners of this contest receive worldwide recognition and a paid trip to the world's largest concrete show. Under the category "Community Service/Not-for-Profit" entries, vote for "MoDOT-Rehabilitation project on Poplar Street Bridge Approach."

Every vote helps and online voting will continue through December 28. Click on the following link to vote for your MoDOT teammates: www.worldofconcrete.com/attendee/crews-that-rock.aspx
Good luck to all our MoDOT crews!

MoDOT Snow Truck Dressed Up for Holiday Parade

Two Festus maintenance employees and a MoDOT truck recently participated in the DeSoto Holiday Parade. With permission and on their personal time, Jerry Lyston, Festus crew leader, and Devin Rielly, Festus maintenance worker, came in on a Saturday to clean, wax and decorate a MoDOT truck for the holiday dressed out for winter operations. A small generator was inside the cinder bed to power all their lights and they even had a tree on top with gifts.

The parade committee was excited to have MoDOT's participation in the parade. Jefferson County motorists gave them great feedback and was impressed with the up-close look at the truck. Many people commented that they didn't realize how big the plows were that cleaned the roads and that they have even more respect for them this winter.



MoDOT truck all dressed up for winter operations and the DeSoto Holiday Parade.

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Comments & Suggestions

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Heritage of Freedom: The Highway Patrol's Troop D Honor Guard presented the colors at the start of the I-49 dedication. (Photo by Cathy Morrison)



View from the Road: As the I-49 unveiling ceremony was concluding, crews began uncovering and turning signs all along the corridor between Pineville and Kansas City. Joplin Senior Maintenance Worker Phil Smith works at Newton County Route AA south of Neosho. (Photo by Tim Bundgard)



Including the Students: Victor Mendez, head of the Federal Highway Administration, is interviewed by Joplin East Middle School journalists Noah Pinjuv, center, and Landon Moore covering the I-49 event. (Photo by Bob Edwards)



Visitor Parking: Helping with parking at the I-49 unveiling was Senior Right of Way Specialist Andy Ellsworth. He guides retired Joplin businessman Mel Walbridge, who was honored during the event. (Photo by Cathy Morrison)

Dec. 12, 2012: Making History With The Unveiling of I-49 in Missouri

by Bob Edwards



Music thumped. Construction scenes popped, flashed and floated in a short video. A spotlight blazed in the darkened gym of Joplin East Middle School.

"Introducing I-49!" District Engineer Becky Baltz declared. Officials yanked a cloth cover from a large I-49 shield and 300 well-wishers applauded and cheered.

This was the dramatic welcome given Interstate 49 in Missouri in a ceremonial unveiling in Joplin.

At the same time, the real unveilings occurred outside on the highway where 1,300 I-49 signs were already in place. Dozens of MoDOT maintenance and construction workers and contractor crews, working in all seven counties between Kansas City and Pineville, quickly uncovered shoulder mounted and overhead signs and turned emergency reference markers to face traffic.

Thus the 180-mile long segment of U.S. 71 was transformed into I-49 on the 12th day of the 12th month of the year 2012.

Looking to the Future

I-49 is the first new interstate corridor to be designated in Missouri since I-64 entered the state in St. Louis in 1988 (and was extended in 2011). I-49 is the first new interstate highway in southwest Missouri since I-44 was built in the late 1950s and 1960s.

"We're going to remember this for a long time," U.S. Sen. Roy Blunt said. "It's a great moment for our state."

When Blunt was a member of the U.S. House, he helped provide advocacy and funding for I-49 for its safety and economic benefits. He worked with House members from Arkansas and Louisiana. He said he was glad to be part of Wednesday's welcoming.

"It's a happy occasion," Administrator Victor Mendez of the Federal Highway Administrator said. Interstate highways are safer for people to drive and provide opportunity for increased commerce generated by businesses needing quick access to a road that can offer freer movement of freight.

Mendez noted that Missouri accomplished the building of I-49 through many years of cooperation among federal, state and local officials and the public.

Partnerships are "the only way we're going to be able to move forward," he said.

Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission Chairman Rudy Farber of Neosho said he is old enough to remember when travel on old U.S. 71 between Neosho and Kansas City took 5-1/2 hours. Now, he said, it's a smoother and safer 2-1/2-hour trip.

Using I-49 as an example, Farber said improving the transportation infrastructure benefits everyone. He called on those present to help MoDOT discuss ways to continue funding this kind of progress.

"Missouri can be the transportation hub of this nation if we're willing to make the investment," he said. "... It is an investment that will pay off."

MoDOT Director Kevin Keith presented special awards to four district engineers who led the effort to build I-49-related projects. Recognized were former District Engineers Joe Mickes, Ken Stalcup and Richard Walter and current District Engineer Becky Baltz.

Blunt presented an award to retired business executive Mel Walbridge of Joplin for his many years of advocacy for I-49.

The Highway Patrol's Troop D Honor Guard presented the colors at the ceremony. The Joplin East Middle School band performed the National Anthem, the 7th Grade choir sang "God Bless America" and the JEMS, the school's Show Choir, sang other tunes as people filed in. The school's art students created an I-49 mosaic that was displayed behind the stage.

More on I-49

- Interstate 49 also carries the U.S. 71 designation because it is still part of the national U.S. 71 corridor north through Minnesota and south through Louisiana.
- The final push to upgrade U.S. 71 to I-49 in Missouri started in the early 1990s after the interstate corridor was enacted in federal highway legislation in 1991 and later given the I-49 designation. Work included completing the highway's four-laning south of Joplin and adding more interchanges, overpasses and outer roads between Joplin and Kansas City. At-grade intersections are eliminated.
- The last five miles of I-49 in Missouri will be built when Arkansas is able to fund and build its portion of a new four-lane road in northwest Arkansas known as the Bella Vista Bypass. More planning on this effort is scheduled in early 2013.
- I-49's cost in Missouri, including future completion of the Bella Vista Bypass, is expected to be about \$400 million.
- The first segment of highway designated as I-49 was completed in Louisiana in the mid-1980s. More construction is needed in Louisiana and Arkansas to complete the I-49 corridor. When completed, I-49, I-435 and I-29 will comprise 1,600-mile long interstate highway corridor that will run from the Gulf Coast ports in New Orleans to the U.S.-Canada border near Winnipeg, a business hub in central Canada.

Additional I-49 Information

5-10-15-Year Employees Honored for their Service

by Angela Eden

Southwest District employees reaching their 5, 10 and 15-year service anniversaries in 2012 were honored at a reception Nov. 30.

District Engineer Becky Baltz praised the 88 employees, with a combined 825 years on the job, for their hard work and dedication through the challenges of the Bolder Five-Year Direction, which began in mid-2011.

Baltz termed the changes the "new normal."

"You've continued to try to find ways to get everything accomplished," she said.

The recipients gathered for their awards at the Howard Johnson's Convention Center in Springfield.



15-Year Recipients: Back row, from left, Tim Smith, Shane Whittaker, Clint Erwin, Scott Bachman, Doug Durham, David Sappington, David Toler, Dewayne Coffin, David Evans and Rick Black. Front row, from left, Nancy Pietrzak, Angela Eden, Dottie Roush and Mary Slaughter.



10-Year Recipients: from left, Ray Strain, Richard Starchman, Tim Thornton, David Henry, Phyllis Humphrey, Adam Humphrey, Justin Watson, Brett Foster, Greg Lester, Ryan Dingman, Andy Morrow, Gena King, Darrell Hoyer, Rod Diggins, Michelle Rogers, Joe O'Hara and Brian Dye.



5-Year Recipients: from left, B.J. Cooper, David Colf, Jason Evenden, Shae Shaddox, Jodie Payne, Jason Parks, Erick Casas, Davin Werths, Justin Moriarty, Eric Cash, Eric Greig, Cody Key, Henry Bevier, Jerry Roland, Crystal Speak and Jeff Caffey.

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Comments & Suggestions

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MoDOT Helps Grant Christmas Wishes to Area Families

For over 25 years, Missouri Department of Transportation employees have helped grant Christmas wishes to Southeast Missouri families through the Christmas Angels program.

"The program began decades ago with a crock pot of chili and the desire to help at least one child," said Transportation Project Designer Jeff Wachter. "With the help of area businesses, organizations and individuals, the program has grown. This year, we sold 1,495 bowls of chili and received many generous donations."

He said the \$6,173 raised during this year's event will help provide Christmas wishes to 120 Southeast Missouri children. MoDOT volunteers work with the Department of Family Services to identify needy children in the area.

"The program has grown locally and many businesses and organizations purchase chili for their employees," said Senior Design Technician Kathy Hixson. "Participants receive a hot lunch and help needy families at the same time."

Hixson added that current MoDOT employees and retirees volunteer to cook, pack and deliver chili for the event.

"This event is a great example of teamwork. Current employees and retirees work together and volunteer their time during the busy holiday season," she said. "This would not have been possible without the dedication of our MoDOT volunteers."

Businesses or individuals wishing to donate to the Christmas Angels program may send or drop their donations by the Division 10 Highway Employees' Credit Union Office, located at 337 North Main Street in Sikeston, Mo. Checks can be made out to the Christmas Angels program.

For more information about the Christmas Angels program, contact Wachter at (573) 472-5294 or Hixson at (573) 258-0932.

Thanks to the 2012 Participants!



To view photos from this year's fundraising event, please visit the SE District's flickr account at www.flickr.com/photos/43000037@N05/.

Thanks for Years of Dedicated Service!

2012 Long-Term Service Award Recipients

On Dec. 6, the Southeast District held a long-term service awards banquet to thank employees with 20, 25, 30 and 35 years of service for their dedication and hard work. To view photos from the event, please visit www.flickr.com/photos/43000037@N05/sets/72157632190336485/show/.



20 Year Recipients
Front: Wayne Shaver, Byron Davenport, Alberta Green, Billy Wells, Russell Divine, Linn Davault
Back: Michael Hensley, Donald Boyer, Rick Russell, Jeffrey Amelunke, Joseph Crum, Jerome Henson, Brian Holt



25 Year Recipients
Front: Dewayne Ligons, Suzanne Roland, Bryan Fortner, Jesse Williams
Back: Jacky Traw, Scott Braden, Tim Richmond, Gary Sager, James Allen
Not pictured: Tony Burrows



30 and 35 Year Recipients
Michael Corl (30 years), Howard Blake (35 years), Tom Fellows (35 years)
Not pictured: John Koenig (35 years)